

@everyword and the end of the world

a lexicographical eschatology

<http://www.decontextualize.com>

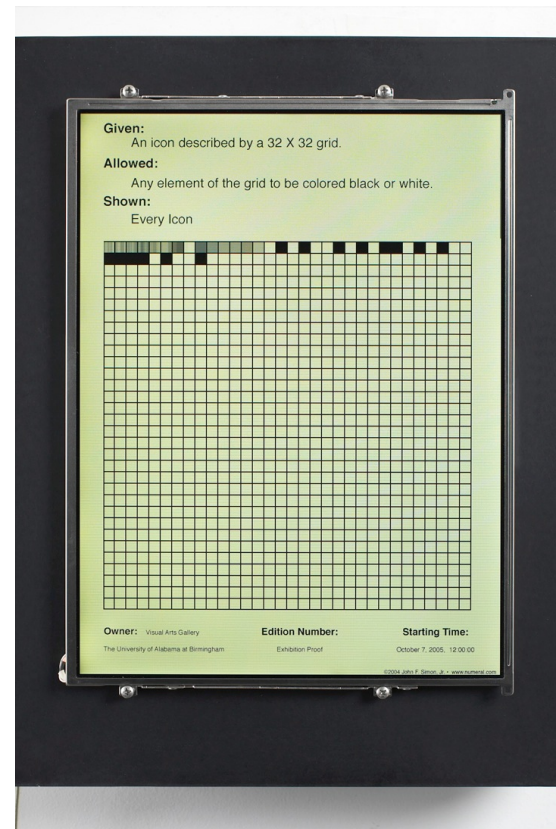
<http://twitter.com/aparrish>

“In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

–Bible



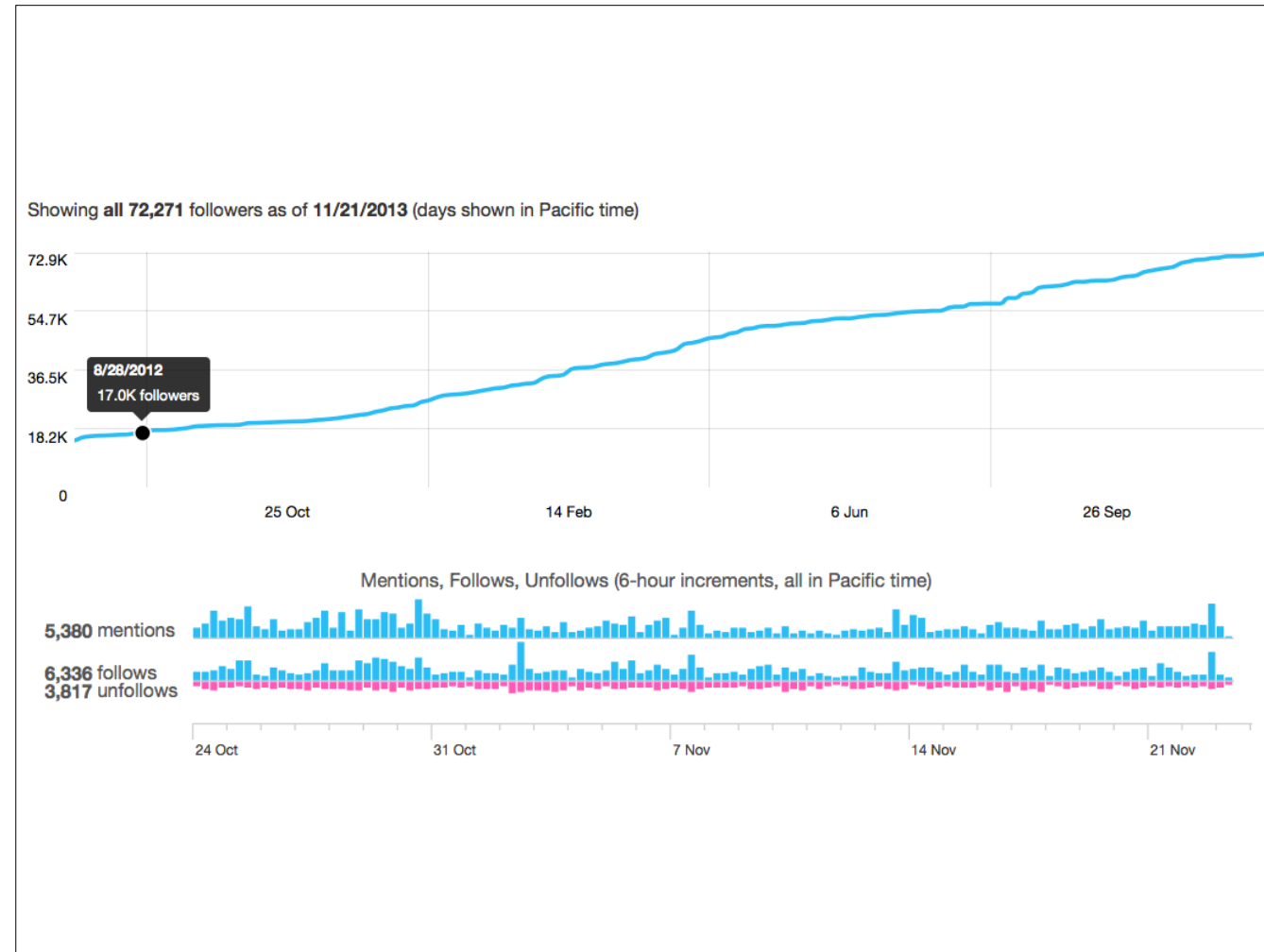
- context: everyword is a twitter bot I made in 2008. its goal is to tweet every word in the english language.



I was inspired by Kenneth Goldsmith and John F. Simon's "Every Icon." Everyword has over 70k followers and has been featured frequently in the media. I did an interview in 2011 with Salt Lake City's local radio station KSL, in which I was given the opportunity to say the word "nipple" on air to thousands of Utahns.



what follows is a discussion about ordinary users that follow @everyword, not the small bot ecology that has been built up around it! (awesome though that ecology may be)... what the community looks like by the numbers...



some metrics! last year around this time there were 20k followers. you can see that the churn is pretty remarkable, but still getting many new followers. over the past month: 5k mentions!

RECENT TWEETS	SHOW: BESTGOODALL	★ FAVES	↻ RETWEETS	↩ REPLIES
treetop 16 Nov 2013, 3:00 PM Pacific time	3x NORMAL REACH	21	43	0
trees 16 Nov 2013, 2:30 PM Pacific time	2x NORMAL REACH	103	183	8
treelike 16 Nov 2013, 12:00 PM Pacific time	2x NORMAL REACH	38	69	2
treeless 16 Nov 2013, 11:30 AM Pacific time		23	38	4
tree 16 Nov 2013, 9:30 AM Pacific time		92	170	11
trebuchet 16 Nov 2013, 7:30 AM Pacific time		40	53	4
treble 16 Nov 2013, 5:00 AM Pacific time		25	34	1

more metrics—just sort of a snapshot of what user engagement with everyword is like.

How do people use/ read @everyword?

people must be getting something out of it, or else it wouldn't have so many followers. what are they getting out of it? as a preliminary answer to this question, a tiny taxonomy of @everyword readers.

Comedians



because @everyword isn't interactive, or rather TO THE EXTENT THAT people perceive @everyword as being non-interactive, any replies directed at @everyword must be primarily for the benefit of eavesdroppers (i.e., using @everyword as a stimulus/material for jokes/commentary actually directed at other followers). these aren't hard to find—I'd say 50%-60% of everyword tweets spawn a little thread like this.

Trolls

-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword There isn't anything to be accomplished by this. You should probably spend more time losing weight you greasy cretin boy.
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword and when 2013 finally arrives (if it does) you will have realized that you wasted 1yr of your life pillow biter.
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword and if I find out your French we're gonna have even more problems
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword Get a job cream hunter
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword I've finally realized that nothing I say will get you removed I don't even know if you are reading these. FUCK YOU
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 2h
@everyword Your account seriously serves no purpose. The shit I just took will give more back to the earth than this waste of broadband
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 3h
@everyword I'll only follow you because I wanna be there when you get to the word suicide.
Expand
-
-  **chad** @gouchcobbler 3h
@everyword Please end your life spam boy
Expand

people who use @everyword as a sink or sounding board for their uncontained vitriol. people assume that no one is paying attention, or talk to a straw man



chad @goochcobbler









2h

@everyword Your account seriously serves no purpose. The shit I just took will give more back to the earth than this waste of broadband

Expand

people who use @everyword as a sink or sounding board for their uncontrolled vitriol. people assume that no one is paying attention, or talk to a straw man, like they're speaking in an empty room

Amateur Lexicographers

Results for @everyword "not a word"			⚙
Top / All / People you follow			
	Escher Raymond @Are_Kelly @everyword not a word View conversation	17 Nov	
	Escher Raymond @Are_Kelly @everyword not a word View conversation	10 Nov	
	max read @max_read @everyword not a word View conversation	22 Oct	
	Krokodil Dundee @Nickrob Not a word. RT @everyword: timothy Expand	14 Oct	
	max read @max_read @everyword not a word View conversation	4 Oct	
	Ben Jacobs @benhjacobs @everyword shut up that's a guy not a word View conversation	22 Sep	
	Bethanie Blanchard @beth_blanchard That is not a word. RT @everyword: teaberries View conversation	5 Sep	
	Escher Raymond @Are_Kelly @everword not a word	3 Sep	

this is a genre of joke about everyword—take a word that is unusual or maybe unknown to you and reply that it isn't a word, thereby calling "bullshit" on the entire enterprise

everyword

@everyword

22 Nov

trig

Expand

ReplyRetweetFavoriteMore

Andris Biedrins News

@SmokeyQRivers

22 Nov

@everyword

 this is not a fkn word #unfollowed blocked and reported @twitter please help

Hide conversation

ReplyRetweetFavoriteMore

1

FAVORITE

3:42 AM - 22 Nov 13 · Details

Reply to @SmokeyQRivers @everyword @twitter

Alec Petrosky

@ActuallyAmBagel

20h

@SmokeyQRivers @everyword @twitter

 Pls halp

Expand

Andris Biedrins News

@SmokeyQRivers

18h

@actuallyambagel @everyword @twitter

 no one likes twitter it is a bad website and no one should go there, i never do

Expand

Alec Petrosky

@ActuallyAmBagel

18h

@SmokeyQRivers @everyword @twitter

 yeah dood Twitter effin sucks like tumblr lul

Expand

here's an example of how that can escalate

Anticommercial Purists

everyword

@everyword

stark

Expand

2 Jun

David Cole

@irondavy

If you aren't paying for it, you're the product being sold. Hope that HBO cash helps you sleep at night, @aparrish. RT: @everyword: stark

Favorited by Casey Kolderup and 1 other

Hide conversation

Reply

Retweet

Favorite

More

1

RETWEET

2

FAVORITES

4:08 PM - 2 Jun 13 · Details

Reply to @irondavy @everyword

Jonnie Hallman

@destroytoday

@irondavy What did I miss?

Expand

2 Jun

aparrish

@aparrish

@irondavy brace yourself, "RT @everyword winter" is coming

Expand

2 Jun

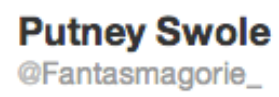
another common trope of joke: a word related to or involved in or identical to a word used in promoting something pops up on @everyword, and I am accused of having "sold out." (for the record I have never received or entertained offers to change the order or content of the bot in exchange for money)

Eschatologists

here's the category that's really interesting to me. eschatology is branch of theology and futurology concerned with the end of the world. many users of @everyword frequently cite it as evidence that the world will come to an end, usually in accordance with something that @everyword will tweet, or as soon as @everyword completes.

everyword @everyword
tit
Details

17 Oct



and twitter ends RT @everyword: tit

 Reply
  Retweet
  Favorite
  More

6

FAVORITES



7:30 PM - 17 Oct 13

Reply to @Fantasmagorie_ @everyword



chichichatter @iano

13 Mar

What do I do with my life after @everyword is **done**? Does twitter just shut down?

Followed by Steven Lehrburger and 1 other

[Collapse](#)

[↩ Reply](#) [↕ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#) [⋮ More](#)

9:01 PM - 13 Mar 13 · Details

Reply to @iano @everyword



Andrew Greene @andrewverte

13 Mar

@iano @everyword what about @everynumber ?

[Expand](#)



everyword @everyword
shit
Expand

21 Feb



Tieran O'Saurus @Irish_Dinosaur
twitter's over pack it in gang @everyword

21 Feb

Hide conversation

Reply

Retweet

Favorite

More

4
RETWEETS

33
FAVORITES



5:31 PM - 21 Feb 13 · Details

Reply to @Irish_Dinosaur @everyword



SOME PEOPLE HAVE much more dire predictions. not just twitter but lo the world entire



dale dillon @Talon64

19 Nov

will the world end when @everyword is **done** with every word?

Followed by your sweet potato

[Collapse](#)



[Reply](#)



[Retweet](#)



[Favorite](#)



[More](#)

3:08 AM - 19 Nov 13 · Details

Reply to @Talon64 @everyword



UnderwearEyes @UnderwearEyes

19 Nov

@Talon64 like, i'm not a scientist or anything so dont quote me, but i doubt it.

[Expand](#)



dale dillon @Talon64

19 Nov

@UnderwearEyes or an end to the English language, alors j'espère que cela n'arrivera pas dammit it's already started

[Expand](#)



UnderwearEyes @UnderwearEyes

19 Nov

@Talon64 *looks at own hand that seems to be transparent* OMG IT'S HAPPENING!!!

[Expand](#)



Lori Trigonis @kaylorikay

6 Oct

When @everyword reaches the end of the alphabet will Armageddon come?

[Collapse](#)

[↩ Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#) [⋮ More](#)

10:04 PM - 6 Oct 13 · Details

Reply to @kaylorikay @everyword



ezra marcus @ezra_marc

6 Oct

@kaylorikay @everyword it was buzzfeed the whole time

[Expand](#)



SKINNY FRIEDMAN @skinny412

6 Oct

@kaylorikay nah they'll just reveal it was a buzzfeed art project

[Expand](#)



♡~♡ @retnacalam

6 Oct

@skinny412 do u know @ezra_marc u guys jus made same joke

[Expand](#)



John De n @like_jamesdean

19 Feb

New decision: not going to college because what's the point if the world's gonna **end** once **@everyword** runs out of New words

[Collapse](#)

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

2

RETWEETS

5

FAVORITES



5:38 PM - 19 Feb 13 · [Details](#)

Reply to [@like_jamesdean](#) [@everyword](#)






Lactor: Acid Monster

@AcidicLactor



 Follow

I think rigging the window of whoever set up @everyword so it looked like the stars were going out as the bot finished would be a fun prank.

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite  More

7:35 PM - 8 Dec 11

Reply to @AcidicLactor @everyword

this is actually a really rad idea

Interpretation

I can't make claims that this is a phenomenon unique to @everyword, but it's visible! here's an interpretation of why that might be. for there to be an end, there has to have been a beginning, and something in between the two—time has to be differentiated, distinct, discrete. eschatology is essentially a belief in design, in a higher power, that is guiding the lives of individuals and the world and the universe toward a particular end. people LIKE teleology: it's comforting to think that everything has a purpose, that—instead of being a collection of quarks and atoms careening essentially at random through a careless universe—we're being led, gradually, like clockwork, to a conclusion that we can predict and understand.

it's also an interesting framing of twitter (or the internet) as a collaborative work that began one morning years ago when two ARPAnet nodes connected and will end when SOMETHING happens, and presumably we'll know what it is when it happens—after which we can all look back fondly at the good times and with pride at a job well done, and then move on with our lives. @everyword offers the possibility that we've all been working toward something and that some day our labor might finish. instead of going on in perpetuity.

Design

this isn't an effect that comes with generation, only with ITERATION. and for iteration, it's only something that has a plausible end date: no one speculates on what will happen when every icon completes. everyword provides something not just to read or use or respond to, but something to witness; it's a feat, not just a bot. something something.



everyword
@everyword



Following

thanks

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite  More

260 RETWEETS	97 FAVORITES	        
------------------------	------------------------	---

7:00 AM - 26 Sep 13